Objectives of Coast Guard in EEZ

2070. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) what are the objectives of the Coast Guard in the EEZ and other areas;

(b) whether the Coast Guard is harassing small fishermen at every opportunity, if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Coast Guard has initiated action against those who indulged in rough tactics against fishermen and their boats;

(d) whether it is a fact that there are no guidelines for Coast Guard when dealing with Indian fishermen and others; and

(e) the steps proposed to initiate urgent action to ensure that the Coast Guard does not treat Indian fishermen as enemy forces?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (e) As per the Coast Guard Act 1978, the duties and functions of the Coast Guard are to protect the maritime and other national interests of India within the Maritime Zones of India and without prejudice to this role, to provide for the following in the maritime zones of India:

1. Safety and protection of artificial islands, offshore terminals, and other structures and devices.
2. Protection of Indian fishermen.
3. Assistance to fishermen in distress at sea.
4. Preservation and protection of marine environment.
5. Prevention and control of marine pollution.
6. Assisting the Customs and other authorities in anti-smuggling operations.
7. Enforcement of maritime laws in force.
8. Safety of life and property at sea.
9. Collection of scientific data.
10. Other duties as and when prescribed by the Government of India.

No instance of Coast Guard personnel harassing fishermen has come to the notice of the Government. However, the Coast Guard ships render assistance to fishermen in distress at sea and tow their stranded vessels to their base port.

Regular interaction is also maintained by Coast Guard with the fishing community through institutionalised community interaction programmes wherein they are provided free medical treatment and educated about aspects relating to safety at sea, use of navigation and life saving equipment.

Proposal of Pak President regarding withdrawal of Indian Troops from Siachen

2071. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether during the recent meeting between the Prime Minister and the Pak President on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly the Pak President had proposed and assured that if Indian forces withdraw from Siachen, Pakistani troops would not encroach up or occupy the vacated area/posts; and

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) During the meeting between Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh and Pakistan President on September 24, 2004 in New York on the sidelines of UN General Assembly, there was no discussion on the Siachen issue.

(b) Does not arise.

Revival of airborne Early Warning System project

2072. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have cleared the revival of Airborne Early Warning System project which was scrapped in January, 1999;

(b) whether any Committee has been constituted to study the platforms for the above system; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Government approved a programme for indigenous development of an Airborne Early Warning and Control (AEW&C) System adopting the state-of-the-art techonolgies. This is a different programme than the earlier project on Air Surveillance Platform.